

## 2006 Iowa Crop Summary

The 2006 crop season began with unseasonably wet conditions. After the first week, the month of April still saw the typical variation in temperature and spring storms. The dry weather at the end of the month allowed Iowa farmers to see the fast paced onset of fieldwork, especially corn planting. Rain in the last week was welcome by those with planted corn. By the end of April, 97 percent of oats had been planted, as well as, 63 percent of corn.

Unusually wet weather prevailed in March and April, which proved to be critical as very dry weather prevailed in May, June, and July. Each of these months brought record low precipitation totals to various western Iowa locations.

May began with cooler than normal conditions predominating. Scattered light frosts were reported but none with significant damage to emerged crops. The middle through the end of the month brought less precipitation and warmer temperatures to much of the state. Winds helped to dry the topsoil while high temperatures and sun crusted soil made it difficult for new plants to emerge. At the end of May, 94 percent of soybeans had been planted and 56 percent had emerged. Corn planting was finished and was 92 percent emerged. Also, the first alfalfa hay cutting was 41 percent complete, well ahead of normal.

The beginning of June saw warmer than usual weather as farmers in the state wrapped up the planting season. The second week of the month saw little rain and warmer temperatures at the beginning of the week, drastically cooling over the weekend. Spotty rain helped crop conditions in parts of the state, while other parts were in need of rain. As the month came to an end, light showers were welcome, providing some relief for many areas of stressed crops. By month's end, the first cutting of alfalfa was virtually complete, while the second cutting was 9 percent complete. Oat acreage headed was 93 percent. The majority of corn, soybeans, oats, and hay were all considered to be in good or excellent condition.

The beginning of July saw seasonable, dry conditions across most of Iowa, while east central Iowa had too much moisture. The second week brought hot weather with only a few spotty showers. The lack of precipitation in the middle of the month caused the deterioration of crop conditions. Northeastern counties experienced the most plentiful rains, but were still short on moisture. Crop conditions were listed as fair to good as a result of this weather pattern. At month's end, 94 percent of

soybeans were blooming and 66 percent were setting pods. The corn crop development was ahead of normal as 99 percent of corn had tasseled and 94 percent had silked. The oat harvest was 81 percent complete and the second alfalfa harvest was 97 percent complete.

August began with above normal temperatures but also saw welcomed rains. In Northern Iowa, strong winds flattened corn. The middle of the month brought needed moisture. Some areas struggled to put up hay between rain showers while other areas received no precipitation at the end of the month. East central Iowa reported Sudden Death Syndrome in soybeans. By the end of the month, pod setting was virtually complete while soybean leaves turning color was 12 percent complete, slightly ahead of the 5-year average. Corn development was ahead of normal and the condition of both corn and soybeans had improved during the month.

September brought cool, wet weather to the state. Moderate to severe hail damage was seen in the northwest quarter of the state. By month's end, the state's topsoil moisture was rated 89 percent adequate and surplus. Part of Iowa experienced their first freeze September 20<sup>th</sup>, and low lying areas reported frost that same morning. Corn harvest was 8 percent complete and soybean harvest was 26 percent complete, both near normal.

The month of October began with seasonal temperatures and below average precipitation, allowing combines to run most of the first two weeks. The middle of the month brought snow varying from a trace to an inch, slowing fieldwork progress only briefly. This was Iowa's earliest measurable snowfall since 1999. The month ended with drier conditions and unseasonable cold temperatures, providing for a busy week. By the end of the month, 67 percent of corn had been harvested and about 94 percent of soybeans had been harvested, both near normal.

As November began, the 2006 soybean harvest was coming to a close. The first week brought cooler than normal temperatures but no precipitation. Corn harvest was nearly complete by midmonth and fall fertilizer application was 52 percent complete by the third week. Overall, this was the warmest year since 1998 and eighth year of the past nine to average warmer than the long-term average, 2003 was the exception. Snowfall for 2006 averaged 12 inches, 19.4 inches below normal. This is the lowest annual total in the 119 years of state snowfall records.